

VZCZCXRO1384  
PP RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN  
DE RUEHUJA #3163 3450750  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 110750Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8019  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

S E C R E T ABUJA 003163

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)

SUBJECT: INEC OFFICIAL CLAIMS IWU AND OBASANJO BEHIND  
PROBLEMS

Classified By: Ambassador John Campbell for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: A senior official in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) discussed the current confusion in voters registration and elections preparation with PolCouns. He suggested that a "Plan B" already presented to the President and to the INEC Chairman could salvage the upcoming elections, but complained that neither of them showed an interest. The official's accusations of INEC and other officials of complicity in the confusion, primarily for monetary gain, raise questions about Nigeria's political will to execute elections in the coming months.  
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) A senior official in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) sought out PolCouns to discuss the hurdles facing Nigeria in its elections preparations over the coming months. He has been involved with INEC since 1998 and related a bit of his background. He said that he had made a "decision of conscience" to dedicate himself to the salvaging of elections preparations after witnessing the egregious problems in 2003 and the "sheer greed" exhibited under Chairman Maurice Iwu.

¶3. (C) According to the official, a "Plan B" had already been presented to the President and to the INEC Chairman as early as May of this year. He said that many within the Commission knew that the electronic registration and voting efforts were primarily an effort to skim money from the huge contracts that would result from the purchase of equipment. He claimed that as soon as the new INEC was sworn in over two years ago, the decision was taken between Chairman Maurice Iwu and Special Adviser to the President Andy Uba to begin a program to discredit the 2003 voters list. "All commissioners were engaged in the effort," he said. He also claimed to have met with the President personally (against the wishes of Iwu) to discuss the campaign and his strategy to resuscitate the 2003 list. He was rebuffed, he claimed, and the President suggested that he should talk to Uba for a share of the contracts. We could salvage the upcoming elections," he complained, "but neither of them showed an interest."

¶4. (C) The official speculated that interventions by the USG and HMG might be effective in changing President Obasanjo's stand on the issue. He pointed out that in 2003, INEC's funding had been held up by the Presidency until late in the year. He said that approaches from the UK High Commissioner and the US Ambassador appeared to have changed the GON position and were directly responsible for rescuing the voters registration. He suggested a similar approach this time, but he worried that the President might not respond favorably. "Andy Uba seems to have some sort of

control over the President and has convinced him that the support of the West is not important," he said. Still, he posited, "this is our last hope."

15. (S) COMMENT: We have heard elsewhere this official's accusations of INEC complicity in the confusion, primarily for monetary gain. While such accusations appear to be widely believed, we have no proof either way. But, if true, his accusations raise serious questions about Nigeria's political will to execute elections and in the coming months, suggest that the opportunities to salvage the system are rapidly disappearing. We note that, unlike in 2003, INEC's Chairman tells us that INEC has no shortage of funds and that elections will proceed on schedule.  
CAMPBELL